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Identification

The Ekonda are a Bantu nation of the Southern branch of the Mongo "in a restricted sense." They number 160,000 to 200,000, in addition to 25,000 to 30,000 Ekondized Pygmies. In addition to the Mbo, Wati, and Isoko, acculturated to the Ipanga and Yembe, and probably also the Lusakani and Mpama-Bakutu, Van der Kerken includes the following tribes and sub-tribes:

a. Baseka Buliasa: Bohanga, Lonianianga, Biole, Besongo, Loondu.
b. Baseka Liombo: Baseka Ntomba Ileli, Djombo.
c. Baseka Ileli: Ntomba Ndongo, Bolia, Basengere (Basengele, Monsengere, Sengere).
d. Baseka Etuka: Waya, Weli, Ilanga, Bolongo, Bakonda, Tembe, Mbelo, Bokongo, Ipanga, Boleandamba.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with a very strong secondary reliance on fishing, especially around Lake Ntumba. The staple crop is manioc, followed by bananas. Lesser crops include peanuts, maize, sweet potatoes, yams, and legumes. There are no cattle, but goats, dogs, and a few chickens (eggs not eaten) are kept. Hunting is unimportant. Fishing is done with traps, spears, nets, hook and line, weirs, and the bow and arrow. Fish and salt (an important local manufacture) are traded to other tribes. Markets.

Sex Division of Labor

Men hunt, do most of the fishing, and clear land, but women do the balance of the agricultural work as well as market trading.

Property

Brass rods constitute an important form of wealth. Property in land is acquired by bringing it under cultivation. In general, land is owned by minimal patri-lineages and administered by the heads thereof, but any member of the minor lineage has the right to hunt and gather on the territories of the component minimal lineages.

Inheritance is patrilineal--by the eldest surviving brother, by a son only in default of a brother, by a DaSo in default of a patri-lineal heir.

Social Stratification

Groups of Pygmies are attached as hereditary serfs to particular extended families or minimal patri-lineages. There are non-hereditary slaves, whose children become members of the owner's family.

Marriage

Infant betrothal is common, and sex relations are permitted after betrothal--during a period of trial marriage. The normal mode of marriage is by payment of a substantial bride-price in brass rods or copper bracelets. It is supplied by the head of the groom's extended family, and the WiMo receives a quarter to a third. Marriage also occurs through the capture or abduction of an alien woman in war. An earlier mode of marriage, now largely replaced by the bride-price, consisted in giving merely a token payment.

Polygyny prevails, but a man rarely has more than 2-4 wives. Each has her own dwelling, and the first wife is chief wife. The sororate and sororal polygyny are forbidden, but there is preferential junior levirate [marriage is forbidden with YoBrWi].

Family

The residential unit is a patrilocal extended family, occupying a compound. It consists of the families of a man and his married sons, together with clients and slaves. A larger extended family (ikundi), averaging about 40 members, consists of a localized minor lineage. It has a patriarchal head with nearly absolute authority over other members. He administers the real and movable property of the lineage, and is succeeded by its eldest surviving male member, commonly a YoBr. These larger extended families reveal a fissive tendence; branches can break off with the consent of the head to form new families.

Residence

Residence is normally patrilocal--in a new house in the compound of HuFa until his death, but avunculocal residence is a fairly common alternative. For example, in the case of an extended

family with no male heir, the headship and property descend to a DaSo, who leaves his father and moves to his mother's family of orientation in avunculocal residence.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local agamy prevails. A man may marry into another village or into another quarter or hamlet of his own village.

Incest taboos and marriage prohibitions are extended bilaterally to fourth cousins.

Descent is patrilineal. Minimal lineages, localized as extended families, are aggregated into minor patri-lineages, each with a sib priest, who comes from a particular minor lineage, and also a head, who is the head of the senior component minimal lineage and who is merely primus inter pares. Minor lineages, which are exogamous with respect to both sex and marriage, are aggregated into sub-sibs, which are agamous for marriage, but not for sex relations. These are aggregated into sibs, which are also exogamous but with exceptions, and these into phratries of traditional common descent, which are really political groups and usually occupy more than one village. Philippe mentions "material clans" (elombe) with chiefs among the Ntomba Njale, states that this group was formerly matrilineal, and concludes that, lying as it does between the patrilineal Ekonda and the matrilineal Badia and Batou, they "present a mixture of these two systems of social organization."

Settlement Pattern

The local community consists of a cluster of hamlets (or "quarters"), separated from each other by bush. Each consists of a group of dwellings arranged on either side of a single street, and each has a men's clubhouse.

Community Organization

A hamlet is a patrilocal clan-barrio, normally occupied by the members of one sub-sib but sometimes by several or by part of one. The community is likewise a patri-clan, but not necessarily a localized sib or segment thereof, for Müller found three sibs of

the same phratry represented in the village he studied. Circumcision is obligatory for boys, but clitoridectomy is not practiced.

Local Government

Each clan-barrio has a head, and each community has a council composed of the heads of its component extended families (minimal lineages).

State

The Baseka Muliasa tribe is politically organized under a tribal chief--rare among the Mongo peoples. Elsewhere there are only ritual chiefs (nkumu) over districts or localized phratries, but no higher political integration. The district has a common assembly place where courts are held. Ritual chiefs are chosen from among rich men; their persons are sacred; they are surrounded by numerous taboos; there are human sacrifices at their death; they are succeeded by the eldest male in their extended family. Van der Kerken reports such ritual chiefs as widespread among the Mongo tribes.

Warfare

Warfare is common, even between districts of the same tribe.

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Identification

The Mongo (Balolo, Bamongo, Bomongo, Mbongo, Lolo) constitute the northern division of the Mongo nation proper [the Bosaka, Mbole, and Nkundu form the central division, the Ekonda and Kutshu the southern division]. With the Mongo, who number over 200,000, live numerous Pygmies or Twa, dependent and Mongoized, who provide game, and various riverine tribes [locally called Baringa, Baenga, Boluki, Nkole, etc.], who live almost exclusively by fishing and trade. Van der Kerken divides the Mongo in the limited sense into three groups: Mongo, Ntomba, and Yamongo.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with some hunting, fishing, and gathering and a little animal husbandry. The staple crops are bananas, manioc, and yams. Goats and chickens are kept, but no cattle.

Sex Division of Labor

Men hunt and clear land, but women do the tillage.

Property

Land is inferentially owned collectively by patri-clans.

Inheritance is apparently patrilineal except probably for a SiSo choosing to reside with his MoBr.

Social Stratification

Slavery prevails, but there is a relatively egalitarian or democratic status structure for freemen.

Marriage

A substantial bride-price is customary.

Van der Kerken reports limited polygyny, but all other sources specify common and preferential polygyny. Each co-wife inferentially has her own hut.

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Family

The patrilocal extended family is the norm, with nuclear family households.

Residence

Patrilocality is the norm, but avunculocal residence is an important alternative; a SiSo has the right to reside with a succeed a MoBr who obtained a wife with the bride-price received for the nephew's mother.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is the norm.

There are patri-sibs localized in communities and patri-lineages localized in hamlets. Matrilineal descent, however, is reported for the Ntomba tribe.

The nkita system, presumably similar to that among the Nkundu, strongly suggests former matrilineal descent and avunculocal residence.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--ise. Mo--nyango. Ch--bona. ElBr--botomolo. YoBr--bokune. Sibling of opposite sex--nkana. Hu--bome, bosaka. Wi--waji, wali.

Bifurcate merging terminology except for BrCh(w.s.), where generation terms prevail.

Cousin terms are of Crow type. The social system as a whole is thus Patri-Fox.

Settlement Pattern

Inferentially there are settled communities composed of hamlets separated by plantations.

Community Organizations

Patrilocal clan-communities and clan-barrios are probable.

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Local Government

Inferentially there are local headmen (clan chiefs) with councils of elders.

State

Inferentially there are politically organized sub-tribes with hereditary paramount chiefs. Succession is everywhere patrilineal, brothers taking precedence over chiefs. Succession is everywhere patrilineal, brothers taking precedence over sons.

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Identification

The nation under consideration includes the following tribes and sub-groups:

1. Ngombe (Bongombe, Bongongombe, Bangombe, Ngombeh), who are not to be confused with a Nkundu sub-group called Ngombe nor with the great "Ngombe ethnic stock" of the north (see under Budja, Ndoko). The Ngombe treated herewith are mainly of Mbole origin but are strongly acculturated to the Bakutu-Ntomba of the Lomela. Van der Kerken lists the following sub-groups: Ikongo, Lotoko, Mpoko, Ngombe (including the Booli, Boyea, Ebengee or Nkoto, and Itsika).

2. Kutu-Ntomba (Bakutu and Ntomba of the Lomela). Though they are Mongo in an extended sense, they differ appreciably from other Mongo in language and culture. The other groups are acculturated to the Kutu-Ntomba. These Kutu must not be confused with the Kutshu or with the Wankutshu division of the Tetela, and these Ntomba must not be confused with the Ntomba tribe of the Mongo proper, the Ntomba subtribe of the Nkundu, five Ekonda divisions known as Ntomba, or a Mbole group called Ntomba. Van der Kerken notes the following sub-groups: Bakutu (Bovame, Nsamba) including the Botsini and Ekea; Bosengea; Nkoe (Kwe, Nkole, Nkwe); Mpombi (Pombi); Watsi, comprising the Besongote and Bgommesa; Yenge.

3. Linga (Balinga, Baringa, Elinga, Waringa)--a generalized name for various riverine tribes who live by fishing and practice little agriculture. Mongoized.

4. Twa or pygmies. Mongoized pygmies are reported for most of the Mongo area though not specifically for the Ngombe territory.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, except for the Linga and other riverine tribes, who subsist largely by fishing and trading (dried fish and pottery for manioc, bananas, meat, and weapons). The principal crops are inferentially manioc and bananas. Van der Kerken for the Mongo tribes in general reports: cultivation of manioc, bananas, yams, maize, and sweet potatoes; chickens, goats, and

perhaps ducks; subsidiary hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Sex Division of Labor

Among the Linga both sexes fish, and the women make pottery.

Settlement Pattern

Settled communities except among the Linga, who live much of the time in boats and have only temporary villages. Kutu-Ntomba houses are rectangular and clustered close together; neighborhoods of hamlets and distinct extended-family "quarters."

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Identification

The Nkundu (Bankundu, Baseka Mondji, Elanga, Gundo, Iukundo, Kundu, Nkundo) are a tribe of the Central division of the Mongo nation in the strict sense, and are consequently closely related to the Mongo proper (forming the Northern division), the Mbole and Bosaka (with Ekota) of the Central division, and Ekonda and Kutshu (with Boshongo) of the Southern division. With them live a very large number of dependent Nkunduized Twa or pygmies--about 45,000 locally called Balumbe, Batswa, Bilangi, Bone, and Jofe. There are also Elinga and other Nkunduized fishing people of alien origin, and the alien Bombwanja. Hulstaert lists the Nkundu component tribes as: Injulo (Ilanga Mongo of Hulstaert, with Engonjo, Wese, and Ngombe sub-tribes), Boangi (with Besombo), Ionda (Yonda of H), Wangata and Ntomba (with Bakaala), Bonkoso), Bongili-Bombomba-Lifumba sister tribes, Bomangola (a single village regarded as oldest Nkundu group), Bongale. Van der Kerken gives a very different list: Bolembelongi-Bokeniuma (with Bokala, Bunianga, Buya, Nsongo, Waola, Lingoi, Ntomba, and Bolenge sub-tribes), Botabongo (with Isaka, Ilongo, Elinga), Okweokai (with Lifino Lileko, Bekili, Esese, Bosombe), Bolemba (Bokote, Lifumba, Hulstaert's Elonga, with sub-tribes Bomangola, Bongali, Lifumba, Wangata), Yonda (Ionda), Lokwa Onene (Bombwandja), Ilanga Mongo (Indjolo of Hulstaert, with sub-tribes Boangi, Yonda, Indjolo, Bombomba), Mputela (with Ekota, Ekonda). Van der Kerken estimates the total Nkundu population at between 150,000 and 200,000 (including apparently, the pygmies).

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with brand-tillage. The staple crops are bananas and manioc (both sweet and bitter); also grown are maize, sweet potatoes, yams, taro, and groundnuts. Animal husbandry is unimportant; there are a few goats (not milked), no cattle or sheep, numerous chickens and ducks (the latter relatively recent), and dogs. Fishing is next in importance to agriculture, and some subjected groups (Boluki, Elinga, Nkole) live primarily by fishing. Hunting is of less importance, and is done mainly for sport, most serious hunting being done by dependent Twa(pygmies). Collecting is mentioned.

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Sex Division of Labor

The men clear the land and plant bananas, but women plant other crops, hoe, harvest, and do practically all other agricultural work. The men hunt and fish; the women do the gathering and a little fishing.

Property

Important objects of property are slaves, iron knives, copper rings, goats, and formerly pearls and shell ornaments. Property in land is held only by men, who acquire usufruct in plots brought under cultivation. Land is essentially the common property of clans (see Community Organization).

Inheritance is primarily by classificatory "brothers" (including ortho-cousins), passing by seniority through one generation in the extended family before passing to a member of the next generation. After "brothers" are exhausted, the rule of predominantly patrilineal (Engels, Schebesta, and Van der Kerken speak only of patrilineal inheritance), the ElSo taking priority. However, there is a matrilineal alternative of some consequence (described by Boelaert and Hulstaert and treated as the exclusive rule by Brepoels). By virtue of the nkita institution, a SiSo acquires certain rights against his MoBr in consequence of the fact that the latter normally obtained a wife with the bride-price secured by the marriage of his Si, the nephew's Mo. Brepoels says matrilineal inheritance is a compensation for money brought into the family by the sister's bride-price, but Boelaert and Hulstaert explain in greater detail what the nephew's rights are: he participates in the family council allocating the inheritance (perhaps receiving a portion himself), he has a right to the bride-price (or an equivalent) received for a daughter of the MoBrWi married through the bride-price received for his Mo, and he can become full heir and successor to his MoBr (taking priority over the latter's sons but not brothers) if he has elected to take up residence with his MoBr. Clearly, then, the inheritance rule, though primarily patrilineal, reveals strong survivals of matrilineal inheritance.

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Social Stratification

Slaves are acquired only for debt, by capture in war, or by purchase. The status is not hereditary; females become free by marriage, and males become free when they marry a free woman or produce an heir for their master by a slave wife. Descent for slaves is strictly patrilineal, and the children of slaves suffer some stigma since they cannot trade matrilineal ancestry. Except for this stigma on the children of slaves, there are no significant class distinctions among freemen, though age status and political status are important. The dependent Twa (pygmies) form a sort of lower caste; marriage with them is forbidden.

Marriage

There are several modes of marriage, as follows:

a. Preferential levirate and sororate, extended from HuBr and WiSi to other relatives--for secondary unions only.

b. Exchange of sisters by two men, in lieu of a bride-price.

c. Free gift of a woman in marriage, without a bride-price. A probable example is Engel's report that a wealthy family without sons allow a daughter to live with one or more men, the first child belonging to the girl's Fa in lieu of a bride-price.

d. True purchase of a wife, as distinguished from marriage with a bride-price. Though not practiced by the Nkundu, this mode occurs among the Elinga.

e. By negotiation through a formal intermediary with betrothal period and payment of a substantial bride-price in installments (ndanga, walo, etc.). The bride-price is normally raised by the relatives of the groom--not only his paternal kinsmen but his maternal, including always his MoBr. It consists of skins, iron knives and/or copper rings, and a male slave. Prestige accrues to a groom who pays a larger bride-price than contracted for. The bride-price goes to the girl's father, and is always used to obtain a wife for some male member of her extended family, most commonly a brother. This gives rise to the nkita institution (see below).

Nkita institution. A wife obtained with the bride-price received for a sister (or other female relative) is called the nkita of that sister, who is the nkolo. Brepoels says the nkita is technically regarded as belonging to the nkolo, though it is not the latter but her children who profit, that the nkita's children are ideologically those of the nkolo (so that patrilineal descent is justified as technically matrilineal), and that matrilineal inheritance by the nkolo's children is interpreted as a compensation for the fact that her bride-price was used to marry the nkita. The accounts by Boelaert and Hulstaert are probably more accurate. They specify that the use of the nkolo's bride-price to obtain the nkita in marriage gives the nkolo's sons special rights against their MoBr and his children by the nkita. These include: (a) a right to the bride-price received for a daughter of the nkita; (2) a right against the MoBr, exercised if the nephew's father dies or his paternal relatives cannot or will not provide him with a bride-price, to go to live with the MoBr, cultivate land of the latter's clan, be provided with a wife by the MoBr (sometimes a secondary wife of the latter, occasionally even the nkita herself, and at least the wherewithal for a bride-price, even if only that received for a daughter of the nkita), and to be the heir and successor of the MoBr in preference to the sons of the latter (but not his brothers). The prevailing Crow kinship terminology, by which the nephew is called "father" by the children of his maternal uncle, justifies his priority in inheritance and succession. In this extremely interesting way, surviving matrilineal usages have been integrated with the prevailing patrilineal ones.

Polygyny is general and preferred (all other sources contradict Van der Kerken's assertion that limited polygyny prevails among the Mongo tribes). The first wife enjoys a special status. Each wife has her separate hut (Engels says a separate apartment in the case of the Ngata). The implication of most sources is that polygyny is normally non-sororal, though Engels says it is often sororal (he may be confusing preferential sororate).

Family

The patrilocal extended family is the norm (with an avunculocal admixture--see Residence). According to Van der Kerken, it typically occupies a special "quarter" within a hamlet of the village. It is called likudu, and is headed by its senior male member as patriarch. Succession is normally patrilineal by seniority. The patriarch is succeeded in order by his younger brothers (including classificatory "brothers" like FaBrSo), then by a SiSo (but only if he has exercised his right of avunculocal residence under the nkita institution--see Marriage above), then (and normally) by ElSo.

Residence

Residence is normally patrilocal--occasionally at first in house of groom's parents, but usually in a new dwelling. Engels reports occasional matri-patrilocal residence in special cases. Avunculocal residence is a regular alternative whenever a nephew exercises his nkita right against his MoBr. Sons usually remain with or return to paternal relatives, even after death of Fa or divorce of Mo, but may exercise avunculocal right.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is the rule. A woman leaves her own village to join her Hu, regardless of whether he resides in patrilocal or avunculocal residence.

Kindreds are unreported and almost certainly absent. Marriage is forbidden with any first cousin, and technically also with any known relative in any line, but this applies in practice only for members of the same community and for others with whom a direct patrilineal or matrilineal connection can be traced.

Descent is patrilineal, with matrilineal survivals. There are exogamous patri-lineages (ilongo), usually localized in a hamlet of a village, and exogamous patri-sibs, usually localized as clan-communities. Schebesta reports totemic food taboos associated with patri-sibs. Patrilineal exogamy is carried further for marriage than for premarital or extramarital sex relations, being extended to sibs traditionally descended from the same

common ancestor of Ego's sib. Traces of matrilineal descent are unmistakable; the child of an unmarried woman belongs to its mother's patri-sib, which is called bonyango; a nephew exercising his nkita privilege is affiliated with his mother's (MoBr's) patri-sib. Moreover, the ability to trace descent in the female line is popularly regarded as more important than the ability to trace it in the male line; no two people who are matri-lineally descended from a known common ancestress may marry; this idea accounts for the stigma on the children of slaves, who have no matri-lineal ancestry, being affiliated with the sib of the Fa or owner. Hulstaert says specifically: "Descent from a common mother is a more important factor than paternal descent." Though matri-lineal exogamy is observed, no authorities report any corporate matrilineal kin-groups. For this reason, the rule of descent is classed as patrilineal with matrilineal survivals, rather than as double descent. The prevailing Crow kinship terminology is another clear indication of former matrilineal descent.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--ise. Mo--nyango. Ch--bona, Hu--bome. Wi--wali. ElBr(ms), ElSi(ws)--botomolo. YoBr(ms), rosi(ws)--bokune. Br(ws), Si(ms)--nkana.

Avuncular and nepotic terminology are of bifurcate merging type.

Cousin terminology is of Crow type. The social system as a whole is thus to be classed as Patri-Fox (or Duo-Crow if descent is regarded as double).

Settlement Pattern

Settled communities consisting of from 1 to 6 hamlets separated by plantations. Each hamlet is composed of a double row of dwellings arranged close together on either side of a single street. Near many communities there is a settlement of dependent Twa (pygmies). There are bachelors' houses in at least some communities.

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Community Organization

Patri-lineages (ilongo), composed of patrilineally related extended families, normally occupy the hamlets of a village, forming clan-barrios. The lineages of a patri-sib normally occupy a settlement, which is thus a patrilocal clan-community, called ese (Van der Kerken), wise from ise, "father" (Boelaert). The agricultural land and hunting territories of a settlement are the communal property of its resident clan.

Local Government

Each settlement or clan has its hereditary headmen and a council of elders, who are presumably the heads of the component lineages or clan-barriors. The rule of succession is patrilineal, subject to the qualifications for inheritance.

State

Clans are aggregated into etuka (perhaps phratries or districts), these into sub-tribes (liotsi), and these into tribes (bonanga); the sub-tribe is normally the largest political aggregate, having a patrilarchal head (Van der Kerken). Engels uses etuka for clan-barrio, reporting it as the strongest functioning unit and the largest political unit today, when larger units have gone.

Warfare

Both intertribal and intra-tribal warfare is common. The causes, according to Engels, are usually to avenge an uncompensated murder or settle an unresolved dispute. Probably the capture of slaves is another reason. Schebesta reports extensive cannibalism (not mentioned by other sources, which deal mainly with marriage and the family).

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Ntomba

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

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THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude, and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly wel supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.